

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7222
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
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AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY VIENNA
USDOE WASHDC
USDOE GERMANTOWN

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, TECH, GW
SUBJECT: GERMAN ENRICHMENT COMPANY URANIT APPLIES FOR
NATIONAL ENRICHMENT FACILITY CONSTRUCTION LICENSE

REF: BONN 5674 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: FURTHER TO REFTEL, THE GERMAN ENRICHMENT
COMPANY URANIT, PARTNER IN THE TRIPARTITE GERMAN-DUTCH-
BRITISH ENRICHMENT ENTERPRISE URENCO, HAS DECIDED TO
START CONSULTATION WITH THE NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIAN
CITY OF GRONAU TO PURCHASE LAND FOR THE ERECTION OF
GERMANY'S FIRST ENRICHMENT PLANT. THE FACILITY WHICH
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WILL BE DESIGNED FOR AN EVENTUAL ANNUAL PRODUCTION OF
1,000 TONS SWU OF LOW-ENRICHED URANIUM BY ULTRA-
CENTRIFUGE TECHNIQUE, SHOULD START ITS PRODUCTION IN THE
BEGINNING OF THE 1980S. END SUMMARY.

2. URANIT CHOICE OF GRONAU SITE BASED ON RECOMMENDA-
TION OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD FAVORED GRONAU

BECAUSE OF POLITICAL REASONS (LITTLE PUBLIC OPPOSITION IS TO BE EXPECTED THERE), BECAUSE OF REGIONAL PLANNING ASPECTS (THE AREA HAS LITTLE INDUSTRY) AND FOR TECHNICAL REASONS (MAINLY CONCERNING THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE PLANNED FACILITY). ALTHOUGH URANIT HAS SUBMITTED ALL NECESSARY DOCUMENTS TO THE STATE (LAND) MINISTRY FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS OF NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA, INCLUDING AN EXTENSIVE SAFETY REPORT DESCRIBING THE APPLIED TECHNOLOGY AND THE SAFETY MEASURES OF THE FACILITY, A FORMAL DECISION TO START THE CONSTRUCTION IS PENDING THE ISSUANCE OF A CONSTRUCTION PERMIT FROM THE MINISTRY ACCORDING TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE ATOMIC LAW. THE DATE OF THE START OF THE CONSTRUCTION IS FURTHERMORE TIED TO THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE URENCO ENRICHMENT FACILITY AT ALMELO WHICH IS PLANNED TO REACH A CAPACITY OF 600 TONS SWU PER YEAR, BUT AT THE MOMENT IS FACING POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES. THE TIME SCHEDULE OF THE PLANNED GRONAU PLANT CALLS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A CENTRIFUGE ASSEMBLY FACILITY STARTING IN 1978 WITH EXPECTED COMPLETION BY 1980. CENTRIFUGES PRODUCED IN THIS FACILITY WILL BE USED IN THE ALMELO PLANT.

3. THE COMBINED ALMELO AND CAPENHURST EXPANSION PROGRAM AIMS FOR A TOTAL ENRICHMENT CAPACITY OF 2,000 TONS SWU PER YEAR (BY THE MID-EIGHTIES), TO BE INCREASED TO 5,000 TONS SWU IN THE SECOND HALF OF THAT DECADE.
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ACCORDING TO URENCO, THE PRODUCTION OF THE 2,000 TONS SWU CAPACITY, VALUED AT SOME DM 4 BILLION, HAS ALREADY BEEN CONTRACTED FOR BY EUROPEAN ELECTRICAL UTILITIES FOR NUCLEAR REACTORS CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION OR IN THE PLANNING STAGE. THE ADDITIONAL CAPACITY OF THE 1,000 TON SWU PLANT WILL BE ENOUGH TO FUEL EIGHT 1,200 MWE REACTORS OF THE STANDARD BIBLIS TYPE. THE OPERATION OF THE PLANT WILL REQUIRE SOME 250 EMPLOYEES, 80 OF WHOM WILL WORK IN THE CENTRIFUGE ASSEMBLY PLANT. THE INVESTMENT WILL REQUIRE APPROXIMATELY DM 1 BILLION.
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